



**Sustaining America's**  
*a s t r a t e g i c f r a m e w o r k f o r t h e*  
**Coastal Communities**  
*c o a s t a l z o n e m a n a g e m e n t p r o g r a m*  
**and Resources**



*prepared by*

The Coastal Programs Division and the Coastal States, Territories and Commonwealths

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

*National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration • National Ocean Service • Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management*



**America's** oceanic and Great Lakes coastal resources are invaluable environmental and economic assets — vital to transportation, energy production, trade, recreation, tourism, seafood production, wildlife habitat, shoreline protection, and biological productivity.

Yet these same resources which attract and support such a large portion of the nation's population face increasing stresses. Our coasts and their varied users are confronted with many threats including erosion, wetlands loss, limited recreational access, and runoff pollution, to name but a few. The growing number of people building along this buffer line called the coast also face loss of life and property from coastal storms.

# Introduction

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**The** Coastal Zone Management Program is a unique federal-state partnership that provides a proven basis for protecting, restoring, and responsibly developing the nation's important and diverse coastal communities and resources. This partnership was created twenty-five years ago through passage of the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (CZMA), and since approval of the first state program in 1976, has resulted in remarkable achievements.

**Unlike** many single purpose programs, the Coastal Management Program focuses its work on the complexity of resource management problems of the coast — the part of the nation whose resources generally are under the highest stress. It takes a comprehensive approach to problems solving, balancing the often competing and conflicting demands of coastal resource use, economic development, and conservation, and fosters an effective partnership among federal, state, and local governments that strengthens the capabilities of each partner.

## The Coastal Zone: Assets Abound

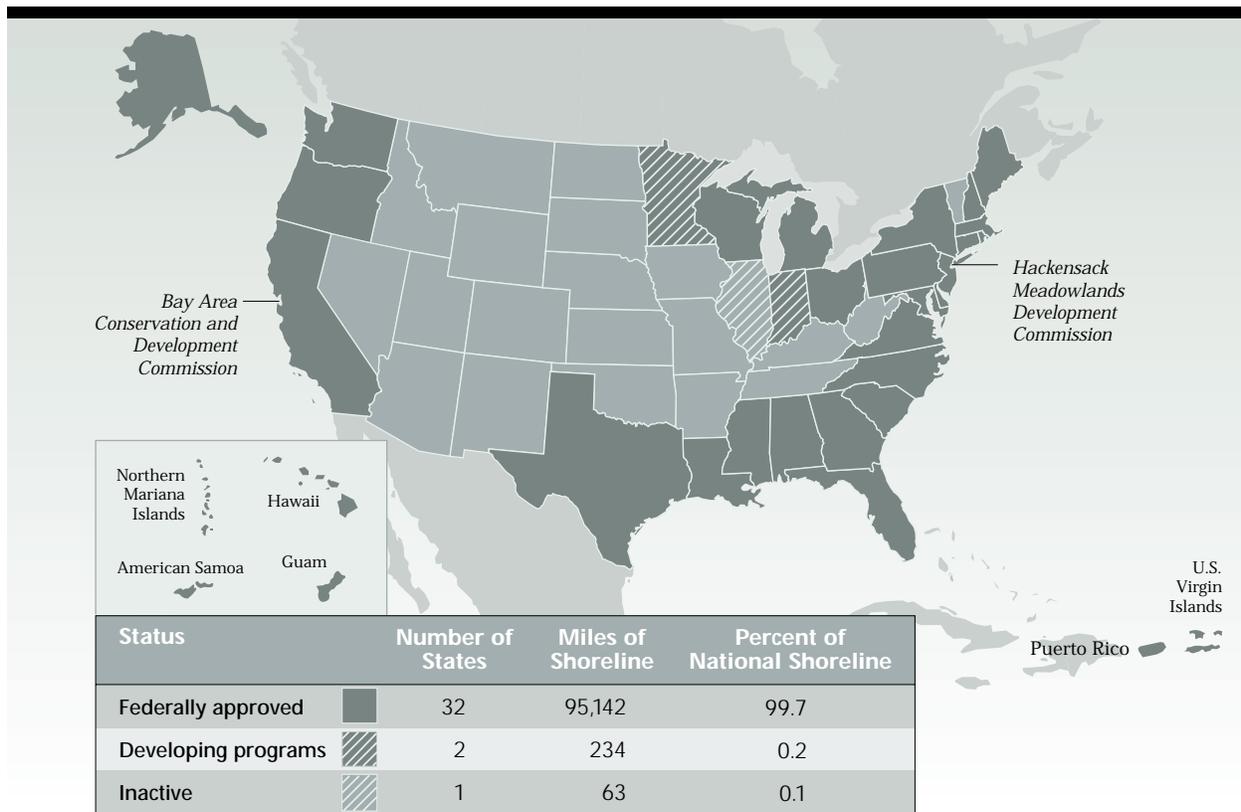
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- Supports over 28.3 million jobs — about 34% of national employment
- Home to approximately 190 seaports with 1,915 seaport terminals: \$400 billion worth of imports and exports in 1988
- Provide recreation to 94 million Americans each year
- Supports 70% of the nation's commercial and recreational fishery harvest
- Home to over 5,000 marinas supporting recreational boating, an industry that generated over \$17 billion billion in expenditures in 1996
- Accounts for approximately 20% of the nation's domestic petroleum production

## Coastal Pressures: the Need for Action

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- Population density is ten times greater than in inland areas and growing at a faster rate: home to half of America's population
- Harvest restrictions in 1990 in approximately one-third of the nation's waters classified for shellfishing
- Losses from coastal hazards continue to rise. In 1989, Hurricane Hugo alone inflicted over \$9 billion in damages
- Approximately 50% of coastal wetlands have been lost since human habitation of North America
- In 1990, over 8,000 square miles of estuarine waters did not support designated uses
- In 1991, over 2,000 miles of beach were closed to swimming due to water quality problems



**Coastal** management is an ongoing process that must be constantly strengthened and improved to meet the increasingly complex and difficult challenges to the protection and conservation of our nation’s coastal resources, communities, and industries. The continued success of this program is predicated on the vitality of the program’s components and the strategic framework that binds them together at the state and national levels — a framework that presents a vision for the future of coastal management based upon three priority themes that encompass the statutory goals of the Coastal Management Act: *Sustain Coastal Communities; Sustain Coastal Ecosystems; and Improve Government Efficiency.*

**This** plan, developed by NOAA and its state, territorial, and commonwealth partners, provides a common federal-state framework for making progress within each of the theme areas, and will guide the development of annual work programs for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s (NOAA) Coastal Programs Division (CPD). It will also provide a part of the framework for the Office of Ocean and

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Coastal Resource Management (OCRM) to ensure that the Coastal Management Program, the National Estuarine Research Reserve System and National Marine Sanctuary Program are working together to attain similar objectives. Because of differing issues and requirements across the nation, its states, territories, and commonwealths, this document does not establish priorities. However, it will help identify the needs and priorities for the federal-state coastal management partnership that can then be built into broader NOAA priorities and initiatives.

# The Strategic Framework

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**The** Strategic Framework is organized around three major themes of the CZMA: Sustain Coastal Communities, Sustain Coastal Ecosystems, and Improve Government Efficiency. The themes are divided into several goals which in turn are divided into several general objectives. Measurable benchmarks will be developed as part of OCRM's annual operating plans to gauge progress toward achieving the goals and objectives.

**The** themes provide a framework for guiding state and federal efforts over the next several years. While it is not anticipated that each state and OCRM will actively address all of the goals, it is anticipated that the program as a whole will make progress toward each of the goals.

## Sustain Coastal Communities

**Reduce** threats from losses from coastal hazards

**Sustain, develop, and revitalize** ports, harbors, marinas, and urban waterfronts

**Provide** public access to the coast

**Provide** appropriate sites for coastal dependent uses

**Preserve** historic, cultural, natural, and aesthetic coastal features

## Sustain Coastal Ecosystems

**Protect, restore, and enhance** coastal land and water habitats

**Sustain and improve** coastal water quality

## Improve Government Efficiency

**Ensure** federal and state consistency with state policies

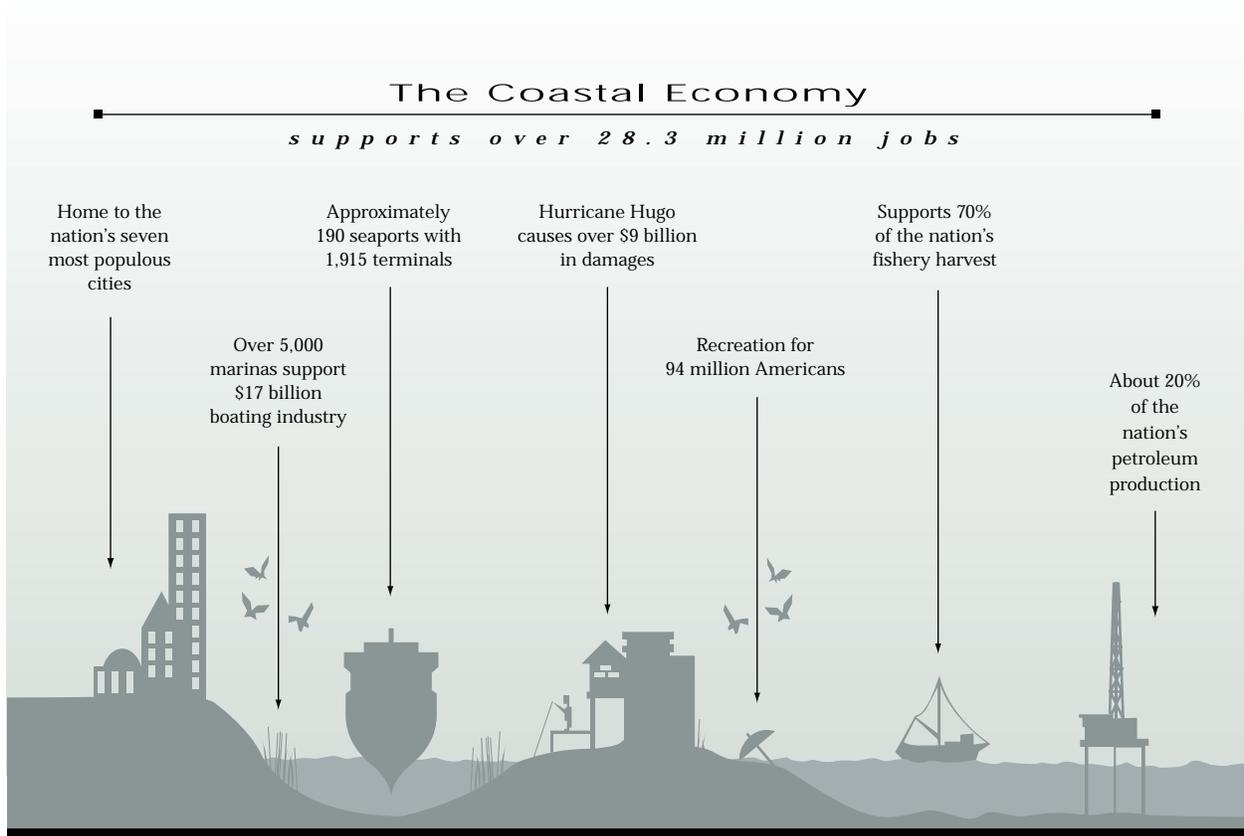
**Simplify** permit processes

**Consider** national interests in the coasts and provide orderly, predictable facility siting

**Provide** for local government and public participation

# Sustain Coastal Communities

**Coastal** communities are critical components of a strong national economy. These communities provide homes for over 110 million people and support approximately 34% of the nation's jobs. The coast is home to over 190 seaports handling over two billion tons of cargo each year. In one year tourism in Narragansett Bay alone provided over 15,000 jobs and \$350 million in revenue. With so much economic activity, and with so many people and jobs dependent upon the coast, it is vitally important to sustain coastal communities. Coastal areas continue to attract people and economic development, and coastal management provides the necessary tools to ensure that coastal communities are sustained. For example, coastal management assists communities in minimizing the threat to life and property from coastal hazards, maintaining adequate space for coastal dependent economic development, and providing public access to the coast.



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**Goal 1 *Reduce the Threat and Loss to Life and Property from Coastal Hazards***

- Improve the ability of federal, state, and local government and private property owners to use non-structural means to mitigate damages from coastal hazards
  - Improve coordination among federal, state, and local officials in mitigation efforts
  - Improve public awareness of coastal natural hazards and opportunities to reduce risk to life and property
  - Improve non-regulatory mechanisms for hazards mitigation
  - Evaluate and reduce government actions that can stimulate development in hazardous areas
- .....

**Goal 2 *Sustain, Develop, and Restore the Economic Vitality of Ports, Harbors, Marinas, and Urban Waterfronts***

- Create, restore, and maintain vibrant and sustainable waterfronts
  - Identify options for underused areas such as “brownfields” and surplus military facilities to encourage economic development while protecting coastal resources
  - Maintain the economic and ecological health of ports, harbors, and marinas
  - Ensure the safety of marine transportation and effective hazard and disaster response capabilities
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**Goal 3 *Provide Public Access to the Coast***

- Enhance opportunities for responsible public access to the coast
  - Protect coastal resources from negative impacts of access
  - Improve public understanding of coastal resources and methods to avoid and minimize the impacts of access
  - Facilitate acquisition and improvement of coastal access sites
  - Clearly define coastal access rights and responsibilities
- .....

**Goal 4 *Maintain Appropriate Sites for Coastal Dependent Use***

- Assist states, local governments, and businesses to identify and conserve sites necessary for future coastal dependent use and development
  - Promote sustainable coastal industries
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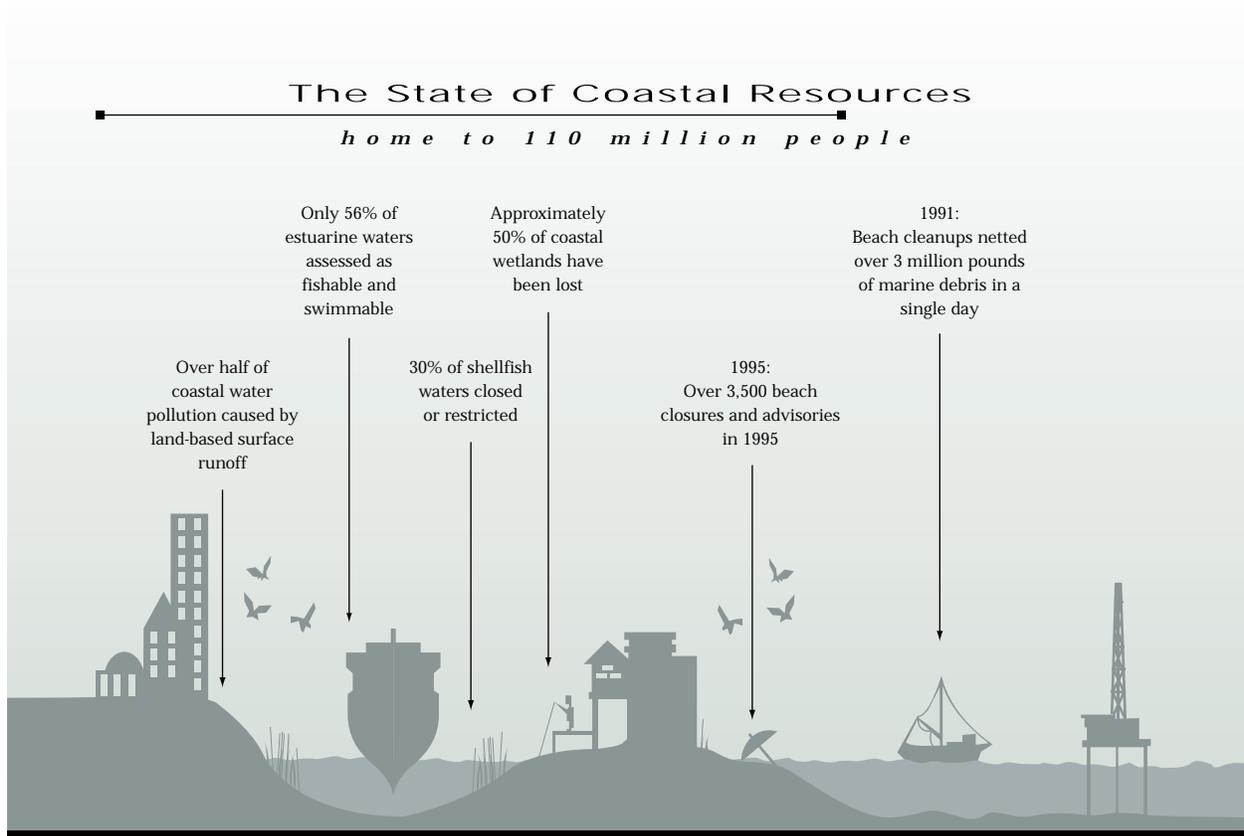
**Goal 5 *Preserve Historic, Cultural, Natural, and Aesthetic Coastal Features***

- Improve public awareness of historic, cultural, natural, and aesthetic coastal resources
- Improve state and local government efforts to identify and preserve historic, cultural, natural, and aesthetic coastal resources

# Sustain Coastal Ecosystems

**Coastal** ecosystems are diverse and productive. These valuable and irreplaceable assets are subjected to ever increasing pressures. Currently, the coast is ten times more densely populated than inland areas — a discrepancy that will only continue to widen. Over 90% of coastal pollution is generated by land-based sources. Sustaining coastal ecosystems will require coordinated multi-disciplinary efforts involving all levels of government, the private sector, and the public.

**The** Coastal Zone Management Act recognizes the national significance of coastal ecosystems and states that it is national policy to protect coastal resources through effective management of coastal uses and development. Coastal management programs have a long history of addressing issues in a comprehensive manner and are positioned to play a significant role in sustaining our coastal ecosystems.



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**Goal 1 *Improve and Sustain Coastal Water Quality***

- Improve the ability of federal, state, and local governments to protect and restore coastal water quality by reducing the adverse impact of new development activities and mitigating the adverse impact of existing facilities and activities
- Enhance federal and state cooperative efforts, both in terms of program operations and policy, to protect and restore coastal water quality
- Increase the involvement and commitment of citizens and affected interests in efforts to protect and restore coastal water quality
- Reduce the delivery of land-based sources of pollution by enhancing efforts to research, monitor, understand, and manage coastal watersheds

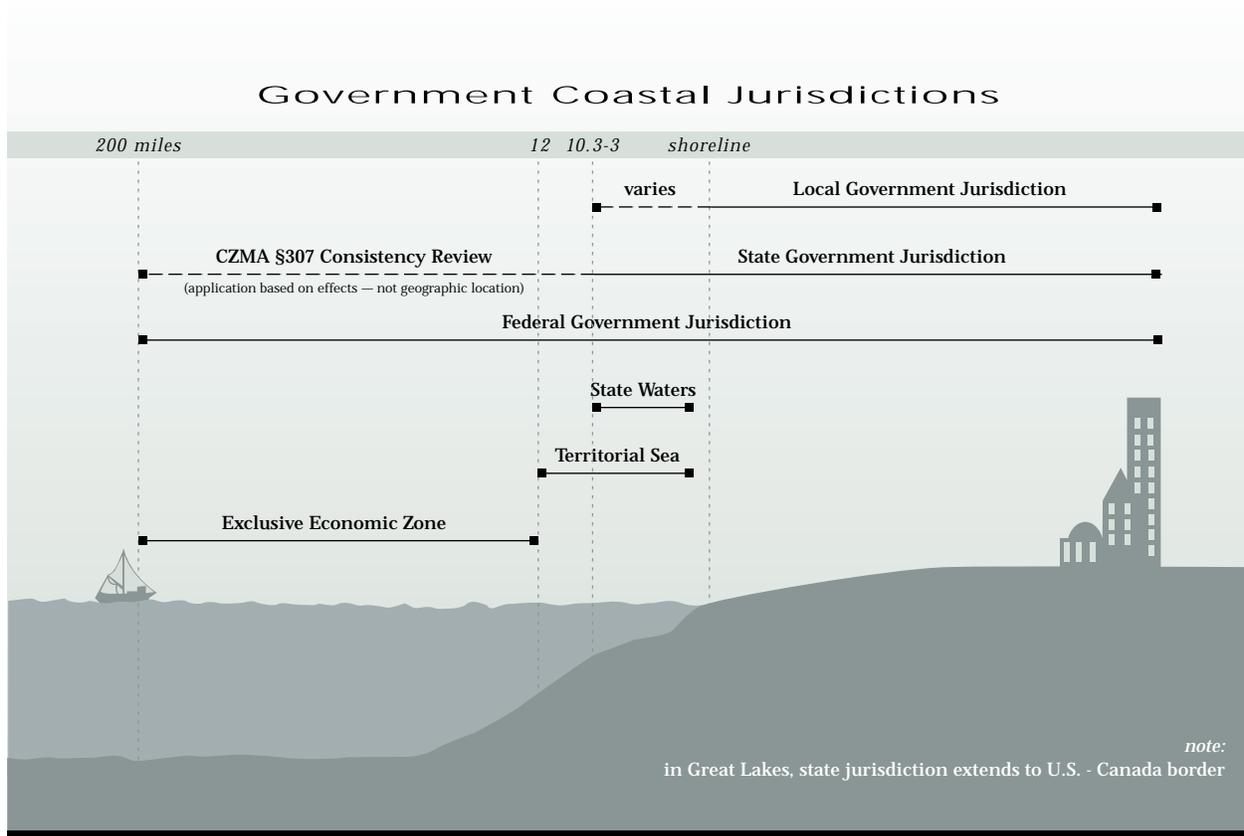
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**Goal 2 *Protect, Restore, and Enhance Coastal Land and Water Habitats***

- Improve the ability of federal, state, and local governments to protect and restore coastal land and water habitats by creating and strengthening linkages between research and management needs
- Enhance federal and state cooperative efforts, both in terms of program operations and policy, to protect and restore coastal habitats on a regional basis
- Restore coastal habitats that may have been impacted by toxic pollution, surface runoff, development, and other disturbances
- Improve tools for resource assessment, characterization, and restoration
- Increase the involvement and commitment of citizens and affected interests in efforts to protect and restore coastal habitats
- Protect coastal dependent plant and animal species

## Improve Government Efficiency

**The** Coastal Zone Management Act recognizes that successful coastal management requires comprehensive and active participation by public and private interests. States are encouraged to: 1) exercise their full authority over lands and waters in cooperation with federal and local governments and other vitally affected interests in developing land and water use programs for the coastal zone, including unified policies, criteria, standards, methods, and processes for dealing with land and water use decisions of more than local significance; 2) coordinate and simplify procedures in order to ensure expedited governmental decision-making; 3) give adequate consideration to the views of federal agencies; and 4) give timely and effective notification of and opportunities for public and local government participation in decision-making. In addition, federal actions that are reasonably likely to affect any coastal use or resource must be consistent with the enforceable authorities of state coastal management programs.



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**Goal 1 *Maintain Federal and State Consistency in Coastal Actions***

- Assist states and federal agencies to understand the benefits and requirements of the CZMA federal consistency provisions
  - Protect coastal resources through early federal agency consideration of state coastal management programs
  - Improve coordination and cooperation between states and federal agencies
  - Mediate conflicts between states and federal agencies and negotiate and facilitate solutions to disagreements
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**Goal 2 *Simplify Permitting and Other Procedures***

- Standardize, to the extent feasible, state and federal permit information requirements
  - Consolidate, to the extent feasible, state and federal permit and other government processes and forms
  - Provide clear, easily accessible information and guidance to permit applicants and other interested parties
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**Goal 3 *Consider the National Interest in the Coast and Provide Orderly, Predictable Facility Siting***

- Incorporate national resource use and conservation considerations in the development of state and local plans and development actions affecting coastal resources
  - Protect special areas designed for their conservation, recreational, ecological, historic, or aesthetic values
  - Ensure that decision processes potentially affecting coastal resources provide opportunities for consultation and coordination with affected federal agencies
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**Goal 4 *Provide for Local Government and Public Participation in Coastal Decision-Making***

- Ensure development and use of timely, effective public notice procedures
- Provide formal and informal opportunities for local governments and the public to receive information about and comment on decisions and issues that potentially affect coastal issues

## The Framework for Implementation

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**The** Coastal Zone Management Act provides the framework and necessary tools for successfully implementing this plan. The CZMA addresses the multiplicity of issues facing America's coasts, provides for a comprehensive approach to management, and relies upon a unique partnership among the federal and state and local governments. This partnership recognizes the need to address problems where they are generally most amenable to solution — at the state and local levels — while also recognizing that there are national interests. Within this framework, the Coastal Management Program employs a wide variety of regulatory and non-regulatory techniques to address coastal issues. Among them are stewardship, planning, permitting, education and outreach, technical assistance to local governments and permit applicants, policy development and implementation, and identification and advocacy of solutions to emerging issues.

### **Federal Role**

- *Set national policy and advocate program goals*
- *Review, approve, and evaluate state coastal management programs*
- *Develop CZMA regulations and legislative proposals*
- *Review / approve legal changes to federally approved CZM programs*
- *Coordinate national interagency policies and activities*
- *Ensure adequate consideration of national interests*
- *Provide “federal consistency” technical assistance and mediation services*
- *Provide technical assistance and information transfer*
- *Provide federal funding*

### **State, Territorial, and Commonwealth Role**

- *Represent state interests in the coast and shape national agenda*
- *Develop and implement comprehensive coastal management programs*
- *Prepare state regulations and statutory change proposals for CZM issues*
- *Update / improve resource management capabilities*
- *Coordinate state interagency policies and activities*
- *Provide state funding and manage federal funds*
- *Ensure state and federal consistency with state enforceable policies*
- *Provide technical assistance to local governments*
- *Ensure public participation*
- *Advocate program goals*

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**Local Role\***

- *Influence state and national agenda and goals*
- *Develop and implement delegated authorities, including permitting*
- *Develop local ordinances and regulations for land and water uses*
- *Update / improve delegated local coastal authorities*
- *Coordinate local interagency policies and activities*
- *Provide local funding*
- *Represent local interests in the coast*
- *Provide a forum for citizen participation*
- *Encourage public education and outreach*
- *Develop and implement local coastal land and water and water use plans*

\* Local government roles in coastal management vary by state, ranging from development and implementation of local coastal programs to receipt of CZM support for local projects

